

CHINATOWN'S HOUSING SHOWCASE

INTRO: A LARGE APARTMENT COMPLEX WAS RECENTLY (3/1) DEDICATED IN NEW YORK CITY'S CHINATOWN. VOA'S SIDNEY PAUL WAS THERE... AND HAS THIS REPORT:

TEXT: MORE THAN FIFTY THOUSAND PEOPLE LIVE ALONG THE NARROW STREETS OF NEW YORK CITY'S CHINATOWN. MANY OF THESE PEOPLE HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR NEW HOUSING, AND THAT HELPS EXPLAIN WHY, JUST FIVE MONTHS AFTER CHINATOWN'S NEW CONFUCIUS PLAZA APARTMENT COMPLEX WAS COMPLETED, EVERY ONE OF ITS SEVEN HUNDRED SIXTY-TWO APARTMENTS WAS SOLD.

AT THE RECENT DEDICATION OF CONFUCIUS PLAZA, IN THE AUDITORIUM OF THE AREA'S NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL, FEDERAL, STATE AND CITY OFFICIALS UNANIMOUSLY HAILED THE PROJECT AS A RESOUNDINGLY SUCCESSFUL SHOWCASE OF A NATIONWIDE EFFORT TO ARREST THE DECAY OF AMERICAN CITIES.

THE APARTMENT PROJECT, WHICH HOUSES ABOUT THREE THOUSAND PEOPLE, COST FORTY-EIGHT MILLION DOLLARS TO CONSTRUCT. IT WAS FINANCED BY PUBLIC FUNDS AS WELL AS NEARLY TWO MILLION DOLLARS PAID BY THE TENANTS AS THEIR SHARE IN THE COOPERATIVE APARTMENT VENTURE.

CONFUCIUS PLAZA IS NAMED AFTER CHINA'S ANCIENT TEACHER-PHILOSOPHER. IT CONSISTS OF TWO ADJOINING, SEMI-CIRCULAR BUILDINGS, ONE NINETEEN FLOORS HIGH, THE OTHER, FORTY-FOUR FLOORS. ALL THE APARTMENTS ARE ELECTRICALLY HEATED AND ALL ARE AIR-CONDITIONED. THEY RANGE FROM SMALL APARTMENTS TO FOUR-BEDROOM LIVING QUARTERS. THE OVERALL DEVELOPMENT

TEXT: AREA INCLUDES A PARKING GARAGE, A COMMERCIAL PLAZA FOR STORES
(CONT'D) AND OFFICES, A MEDICAL GROUP SERVICE FACILITY, COMMUNITY ACTIVITY ROOMS, A NEW SCHOOL AND PLAYGROUNDS.

THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE DEDICATION CEREMONIES WAS THE PRESENTATION TO NEW YORK CITY OFFICIALS OF WHAT WAS DESCRIBED AS A "GIANT FORTUNE COOKIE." A FORTUNE COOKIE IS USUALLY PRESENTED TO DINERS IN AMERICAN CHINESE RESTAURANTS AFTER THE MAIN MEAL -- A SMALL, HOLLOW, TRIANGULAR-SHAPED WAFER. INSIDE THE COOKIE IS A PIECE OF PAPER ON WHICH IS PRINTED A "FORTUNE" -- USUALLY A HAPPY THOUGHT. AT THE CONFUCIUS PLAZA DEDICATION, TWO PEOPLE CARRIED THE "GIANT FORTUNE COOKIE" ONTO THE AUDITORIUM'S STAGE. THEN, TWO SIX-YEAR OLD CHINESE GIRLS POKED INTO THE "COOKIE" -- AND WITHDREW A GIANTLY-WORDED "FORTUNE"...WITH THE WORDS: "YOUR FORTUNE IS IN CONFUCIUS PLAZA."

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BML/RCS